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Message Text

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ACTION CU-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 PRS-01 PA-02 EB-08 COME-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO USIA WASHDC
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3816

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STATE FOR CU

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: ECON MAJOR PROGRAM

SUMMARY: RECENT PROGRAM"SEEKING ECONOMIC HARMONY -- PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN US-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP" ONE OF MOST SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS TO DATE. TIMING OF USHIBA VISIT TO U. ., PARTICIPATION OF AMBASSADOR AND KEIDANREN PRESIDENT DOKO AND COMBINATION OF PRESTIGIOUS SPEAKERS WITH DIVERSE STYLES AND APPROACHES MADE PROGRAM ESPECIALLY APPREALING TO HIGHEST LEVEL AUDIENCES. MEDIA COVERAGE IN BOTH NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PRESS WAS EXTENSIVE. EXCELLENT SUPPORT FROM AGENCY CONTRIBUTED TO OVERALL SUCCESS OF PROJECT.

1. EVENTS AND AUDIENCES: PROGRAM CARRIED OUT UNDER AUSPICES ALL AMERICAN CENTERS EMPHASIZING WIDE MIX OF FORMATS FROM INTERVIEWS AND INFORMAL SMALL LUCHES AND DINNERS TO LARGE SYMPOSIA.

-- PRE-PROGRAM -- PRE-PROGRAM BRIEFINGS WITH EMBASSY ECON OFFICER, USIS STAFF AND AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY REPS PROVIDED SPEAKERS FIRM GROUNDING IN PROBLEMS AND POLICY
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PRIOR FIRST SEMINAR OSKA.

-- OSAKA -- 12/2 PROGRAM CO-SPONSORED BY KANKEIREN AFFILIATE OF KEIDANREN (JAPAN'S MAJOR BUSINESS FEDER-ATION). 50 TOP OSAKA AREA BUSINESS EXECS SUCH AS CHRMN OF BOARD, SUMITOMO ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES, PARTICIPATED. SPEAKERS WERE SIDNEY WEINTRAUB, JOHN KARLIK AND ECON

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OFF PIEZ SUBSTITUTING FOR MALMGREN WHO FORCED TO CANCEL. AUDIENCE RESPONDED ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO DISCUSSION WITH AMERICANS STRESSING IMPORTANCE OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION, EXPANSION OF JAPANESE ECONOMY, FREELY MOVING EXCHANGE RATES. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS EXPOSED AUDIENCE TO AMERICAN CONCERNS AND SEVERITY OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS WE FACE.

12/3 PROGRAM WITNESSED MUCH HIGH LEVEL DISCUSSION WITH 20 ACADEMICS AND SELECTED ECONOMISTS AT OSAKA CENTER. HERE THERE WAAS GOOD FOCUSED INTERACTION OF IDEAS BETWEEN JAPANESE AND AMERICANS. KANSAI U. PROF. COMMENT TYPICAL "I HAVE PARTICIPATED IN MANY OSAKA AM. CENTER PROGRAMS OVER PAST FEW YEARS BUT HAVE NEVER SEEN PARTICIPANTS ENGROSSED IN DISCUS-SIONS IN SUCH LIVELY WAY."

-- NAGOYA -- ALSO SUCCESSFUL CENTER PROGRAM INVOLVING 50 ECONOMISTS, LABOR LEADERS, JOURNALISTS. WEINTRAUB AND KARLIK MADE REINFORCING PRESENTATIONS DIRECTLY TO POINT WITH GOOD AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION. WHILE NOTE PERHAPS CONVERTED TO U.S. VIEW, MANY FOR FIRST TIME CAME FACE TO FACE WITH AMERICANS WITH CAREFULLY REASONED COMPLAINTS AGAINST JAPANESE POLICY. AMERICANS UNDERLY-ING MESSAGE WAS SIMPLE, EITHER JAPANESE MAKE ADJUSTMENTS SOON OR U.S. WILL, AND CHOICE WON'T BE JAPAN'S MUCH LONGER. A POWERFUL MESSAGE BUT REASONABLY AND INTEL-
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LIGENTLY EXPRESSED.

-- KYTO -- KYOTO CENTER PRORAM 12/7 DID NOT GO AS WELL AS OTHERS. PRESENTATIONS BY AMERICANS UNIFORMLY GOOD BUT AUDIENCE OF 17 MOSTLY ACADEMICS DID NOT RESPOND WELL. APPEARED TO BE SOME "TALKING PAST EACH OTHER." NEVERTHELESS WAS DIALOGUE OF SORTS AND AIRING OF OUR VIEWS, THUS WORTH BEST EFFORTS PUT INTO IT BY ALL CONCERNED.

-- FUKUOKA -- FORMAL PROGRAM AT CENTER 12/8 AND INFORMAL DINNER DREW STELLAR AUDIENCE INCLUDING PRESIDENTS OF SOME OF THE LARGEST EXPORT COMPANIES IN FUKUOKA. SIGNIFICANT POINT AGAIN IS THAT JAPANESE WERE FACE TO FACE WITH ARTICULTE, KNOWLEDGABLE AMERICANS ON UNDESIRABLE BY-PRODUCTS OF POLICIES THEY HELPED INFLUENCE. LIVELY AND INTELLIGENT DISCUSSION ENSUED AMONG THE 70 MEMBERS OF AUDIENCE AND TWO SPEAKERS.

-- SAPPOR -- ONE OF CENTER'S MOST EXCITING ECONOMIC PROGRAMS, SESSION HERE 12/9 CONSISTED OF LECTURE/DISCUS-

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SION WITH 53 ECONOMISTS, WRITERS AND BUSINESSMEN. ATTENDEES INCLUDED DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF BANK OF TOKYO IN SAPPORO AND FORMER IMF DIRECTOR KAICHI KAWAGUCHI. SESSION OVER LUNCH FOLLOWING DAY PERMITTED KEY PARTICI-PANTS TO EXPLORE ISSUES THAT DISCUSSED AT PREVIOUS DAY'S PROGRAM.

-- TOKYO -- MAJOR SYMPOSIUM 12/13 WAS CENTERPIECE OF ENTIRE SERIES. AN UNPRECEDENTED BREAKTHROUGH PROGRAM FOR TOKYO CENTER WHICH ARRANGED FULL CO-SPONSORSHIP BY KEIDANREN WITH PRESIDENT DOKO GIVING OENING ADDRESS. AUDIENCE OF 400 WHICH FILLED KEIDANREN HALL TO CAPACITY INCLUDED 300 OF CENTER'S PRIMARY AUDINECE SELECTED FROM HIGH LEVEL ECONOMIC CONTACTS. AMBASSADOR MANSIFLED
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GAVE ADDRESS FOLLOWING PRESIDENT DOKO'S, THUS ASSURING WIDE MEDIA COVERAGE. PACKING EXCELLENT.

THE AMERICAN SPEAKERS AUGMENTED HERE BY PROF. ROBERT STERN WHO MADE INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO PROGRAM. FORMAT PERMITTED AMERICANS TO SPEAK AND GAVE NATIONALLY PROMINET JAPANESE ECONOMISTS OPPRTUNITY TO JOIN WITH

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OTHER TWO AMERICANS IN COMMENTING ON ISSUES RAISED IN SPEAKER'S PRESENTATION.

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DISCUSSION MARKED BY REAL EXCHAGEN WITH BOTH SIDES GIVING THOUGHTFUL CONSIDERATION AND OCCASIONALLY CONCEDING POINTS.

WE TOOK SOME LUMPS ON LACK OF ENERGY POLICY. JAPANESE FOR THEIR PART, GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED NEED FOR TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND MANY (INCLUDING DOKO) URGED MORE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR JAPAN. THERE WAS FOCUS TO ALL DISCUSSION YET LITTLE FEELING OF HASTE OR ABRUPTNESS. ONE SESSION SMOOTHLY MERGED INTO ANOTHER.

TO ANSWER FREQUENT CRITICISM THAT INSUFFICIENT TIME AVAILABLE FOR REAL SPECIALISTS TO GO INTO ISSUES IN DEPTH, TAC SCHEDULED FULL UNSTRUCTURED SECOND DAY AT AMERICAN CENTER WITH 20 KEY PARTICIPANTS TO FOLLOW-UP POINTS RAISED PREVIOUS DAY.

JAPAN CHAIRMAN OF TRI-LATERAL COMMISSION, WATANABE; DIRECTOR OF THE BOARD OF JETRO, YAMADA; COUNSELOR AND FORMER CHAIRMAN OF BANK OF TOKYO, HORIE; AND DIRECTOR OF BOARD OF EX-IM BANK OF JAPAN, FUJIOKA, SPENT ENTIRE DAY IN INTENSE EXCHANGE WITH AMERICANS. CALIBRE OF UNCLASSIFIED

AUDIENCE AND FOCUS OF DISCUSSION UNPRECEDENTED FOR CENTER PRORGAM.

2. MEDIA COVERAGE: IN OSAKA AND ESPECIALLY WITH TOKYO SYMPOSIA, MEDIA COVERAGE WAS VOLUMINOUS. IN TOKYO EVERY MAJOR ENGLISH AND JAPANESE DAILY COVERED AMBASADOR'S AND DOKO'S PARTICIPATION AND SOME DISCUSSION OF SEMINAR ON FIRST OR SECOND PAGE. NHK DEVOTED PART OF ITS NOON NEWS TO EVENT. COVERAGE BY REGIONAL PRESS ALSO GOOD INCLUDING INTERVIEWS WITH DR. KARLIK WHO, BECAUSE OF TOPIC OF PROTECTIONISM WAS PARTICULAR FOCUS MEDIA ATTENTION.

3. SUPPORT MATERIALS: IPS PROFILES, PRESENTATION BOOKS, ARTICLES AND OTHER MTERIALS COMBINED WITH POST PRODUCED TRANSLATIONS OF SPEECHES, WRAP-UP VTR, BOOK DISPLAY, ALL ADDED EXTRA TOUCH ENABLING US TO REINFORCE AND ADD TO MESSAGES SPEAKERS BROUGHT.

4. SPEAKERS: MAJOR CREDIT MUST GO TO SPEAKERS THEMSELVES. WEINTRAUB WAS CLEARLY IN HIS ELEMENT AS A PROFESSIONAL ECONOMIST AND NEGOTIATOR. HE STRESSED TRADE AND EXCHANGE RATE ISSUES IN REASONABLE BUT FIRM WAY. KARLIK ATTRACTED MEDIA ATTENTION WHEREVER HE WENT. JAPANESE WERE NOT HAPPY WITH MESSAGE HE BROUGHT.

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HE IS BLUNT, STRAIGHT-FORMWARD AND INCISIVE. HE IS ALSO FIRST RATE ECONOMIST. HE DID EXCELLENT JOB OF EXPLAINING NOT ONLY ABSTRACT NOTION OF CONGRESSIONAL SENTIMENT BUT SERVED AS VISIBLE EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS TOWARDS JAPAN'S ECONOMIC POLICY IN U.S. CONGRESS.

TO THIS TEAM, STERN INTRODUCED ADDED DIMENSION.
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BY SIMPLY ILLUSTRATING, QUIETLY AND SYMPATHETICALLY, THAT BASIC ECONOMIC THEORY PROVED JAPAN COULD TAKE MEASURES THAT WOULD GREATLY BENEFIT ITS OWN DOMESGIC ECONOMY WHIEL SIMULTAEOUSLY EASING U.S. JAPAN PROBLEMS, HE PERFORMED A KIND OF ACADEMIC JUJITSU ON ADUIENCE.

THIS TEAM, (AUGMENTED IN OSAKA BY ECON COUSELOR PIEZ WHO HAS ON MANY OCCASIONS GIVEN SOLID PERFORMANCES AS AN ECONOMIC SPEAKR AT OUR AC'S) GAVE AN INTERESTING MIX IN STYLES AND VIEWPOINTS WHILE REMAINING CLOSE IN SUBSTANCE OF PRESENTATION.

5. FOLLOW-UP: POST CONTINUING PROGRAMS WITH PORF. STERN AND WILL BE WORKING WITH SAME AUDIENCES USING SPEAKERS AND SUPPORT MATERIALS IN MONTHS AHEAD. WE WANT FOR EXAMPLE TO PORTRAY NEW U.S. ENERGY LEGISLATION AS OUR EFFORT TO PUT ECONOMIC HOUSE IN ORDER. ALSO WISH TO TALK ABOUT AND LABOR GROUPS IN BOTH OUR COUNTRIES AND THEIR IMPACT OF TRADE PROBLEM. NEED FOR HIGHLY QUALIFIED ECONOMISTS, PREFERABLY THOSE IN GOVERNMENT AND THOSE WITH GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE, TO TALK ABOUT U.S. JAPAN ECONOMICS REMAINS GREAT AND WE CAN USE ALL AGENCY AND CU CAN SUPPLY.

6. POST HIGHLY APPRECIATIVE OF STRONG SUPPORT TO ECON SEMINAR PROJECT BY AGENCY AND STATE. SPEAKERS VERY EFFECTIVE AND ALONG WITH MATERIAL SUPPORT FROM AGENCY BELIEVE POST ABLE SCORE SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM SUCCESS AT CRITICAL TIME. OTHER EMB ELEMENTS VERY PLEASED WITH QUALITY OF PROGRAMS.
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